

OUR SHORT STORY PAGE

"STEP LIVELY"

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PRESTON

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"LET 'em off first! Let 'em off! All aboard! Step lively, please! Both gates! Step lively!" chanted Patrick Hennessey, subway guard, with the rich brogue of his native land.

The early morning crowd poured into the cars to the right and left of him, as he stood at his post with his hands on the levers ready to close the doors. And then, right at the tail of the crowd, came Katie, her hair roughened and her cheeks rosy from the crisp wind which was blowing through the streets above.

"Is this an express, then?" she asked breathlessly, as the door shot to behind her.

"It is, sure," answered Patrick, looking at her so earnestly that he almost forgot to call the next station.

"Faith, I'm glad of that," she said with a sigh of relief and a look out of a pair of Irish eyes that made Patrick think of County Kerry. "I was afraid it was late I would be at the restaurant," she explained with a frank glance at her companion. "I go on duty at eight o'clock."

"Do you so?" exclaimed Patrick. It seemed to him the most interesting piece of information that he had ever received. That glance had set his inflammable Irish heart on fire.

"Pass up to the centre of the car! Don't block the door!" he shouted as the crowd surged in at the stations. "Not you, darlin'," he added, fervently under his breath, with a sidelong look at the rosy-cheeked Irish girl. "For the love of Hiven, stay near me with your pretty eyes and your rid cheeks!" And then he said aloud to her with formal politeness, "Perhaps you would be acquaintin' me with what station you get off at, and then I could be tellin' you if we reach there before eight o'clock."

"Fourteenth Street," she answered.

"We get there in time, then, that is, if you don't be havin' far to walk," he added, with an admiring glance.

"Oh, no," she laughed. "I work at Casey's restaurant in Third Avenue, just beyond."

"I mind the place well," put in Patrick eagerly, "and I am after hearing that it is a good place, too."

"It is so."

"Only the other day, when I was passin', I says to myself, 'I'll stop in there for a bite some day,'" he went on cunningly.

"Sure, then, do," she encouraged. "And ask for Katie Doran's table, for Casey takes notice when we do bring in a new customer, and he gives us a percentage if he comes steady."

"Faith, then, you'll be makin' your fortune off Patrick Hennessey," he put in boldly, "for I'll be that stiddy!"

Katie shot a glance at him.

"Grand Central Station! Fourteenth Street next!" shouted Patrick, suddenly alive to his duties as the train slowed up.

When the doors opened, the crowd of hurrying commuters pressing into the train carried Katie with it well up into the car, and Patrick saw no more of her until she tripped off the train with a glance at him in passing that made him think that the clamorous Fourteenth Street Station was the finest spot on the line.

"Faith, there's a fire in my heart that's crackling with love for you," he murmured, looking after her as she regrettably closed the doors and shouted, "Brooklyn Bridge next! Change for City Hall!"

All day long Patrick's train went its roaring way up and down under the streets of Manhattan, carrying hurrying multitudes hither and thither, and Patrick called the stations as usual, only "Fourteenth Street" had a new sound to him because he knew that Katie Doran was "just beyond" in Casey's restaurant.

All day long, he figured over what he would say to her when he went to Casey's for his evening meal, but he never once thought of what he would eat, for love, swift and sudden, was working its own sweet will on Patrick.

His working hours came to an end at last. It was dark when he turned from Fourteenth Street into Third Avenue, and Casey's illuminated sign shone invitingly a little way up from the corner.

Patrick walked briskly to the place. The windows on each side of the door were emblazoned with the words "Casey's Restaurant" done in a gilt scroll, and behind the glass were pyramids of charlotte-russes and monuments of shiny red apples set in a field of pics and flanked by placards inscribed with the words, "Home Cookin'."

Patrick paused uncertainly in the door and looked past the desk of the haughty lady cashier down the long narrow room, trying to find Katie among the hurrying waitresses.

Yes, there she was, at the fifth table on the left, and she had seen him. She was nodding and smiling! Patrick's heart was in his mouth as he walked down the room.

"Good evening, Mr. Hennessey," said Katie, industriously polishing a section of the marble-topped table, "will you be so kind and take this place? I thought belike you would forget Casey's before night," she added archly.

"It was not Casey's I was rememberin'," answered Patrick with an ardent glance.

"Oh, was it not, then?" she returned with a toss of her head and a slight blush. "And what will you have to eat, Mr. Hennessey?" she went on hastily, handing him a bill of fare.

Patrick waved it away. "And would you mind ordering my dinner for me yourself?" said he. "I don't so much care what I ate, just so it takes a long time," he added with another glance.

"Faith, then, you are easy suited," she laughed.

"Deed and I'm not," answered Patrick stonily, "but sure and I know when I am suited," he added looking straight at her.

"Do you so?" put in Katie with another toss of her head and another blush for good measure, as she turned toward the kitchen.

Patrick watched her as she walked lightly down

Finally she came over to Patrick's table. "Can I serve you to anything, Mr. Hennessey?" she asked demurely.

"Thank you, Miss Doran, I am well helped," he answered gloomily. "Don't be lettin' me keep you from your friend," he added with a jerk of his head towards the other table.

"Sure, I will not then," returned Katie with a toss of her head, and, putting the check for the dinner at his elbow, she went back to Jerry's table and the two talked more gaily than ever.

Patrick pretended not to notice them, and tried to eat his mince pie, but he could not do it, although it was certified as deep dish and home made.

Finally he could stand it no longer, and taking advantage of one of Katie's brief absences in the kitchen he snatched up his check from the table, paid the lady cashier with the far-off manner, and bolted from the room.

The next day Patrick performed his duties with a heavy heart and winced every time he called "Fourteenth Street." Even his "Step lively" had no snap to it.

"I might have known there was no chance for me," he said to himself gloomily. "Of course, an angel like her would be bespoken."

Patrick vowed a dozen times during the day that he would never go near Casey's again, but when night came he found himself turning the corner of Fourteenth Street into Third Avenue. "Why would I be after lettin' a spalpeen like that drive me away?" he demanded of himself scornfully.

"It is a fine place to ate in, and there are other tables in the room besides Katie Doran's!"

But when he opened the door of the restaurant and saw Katie's trim figure at the fifth table on the left, he went to her as straight as the moth to the flame.

"Good evening, Mr. Hennessey," she said with

That brought Patrick's air castles tumbling about his ears, and he went forth from Casey's in deep dejection.

The next day was a hard one for Patrick, and he carried a sore heart with him on his trips up and down the subway.

Late in the afternoon, just as he had closed the doors at Fourteenth Street on the up trip and rung his two-bell starting signal, a couple came running frantically across the station platform. They were coming so fast in their eagerness to catch the train, that, before she could stop herself, the girl, who was in advance, had flattened her little nose against the glass panel of the door. Patrick looked up and saw the disappointed face of Katie Doran, and the detestable Jerry just behind her.

He gave them one glance, and then he did something grossly against the rules of the company. He slid the door back a foot, whisked Katie aboard, then closed it sharply in the face of the astonished Jerry, and the train thundered away into the tunnel, leaving him gaping on the platform.

"Mercy me!" gasped Katie, and she squeezed her face against the glass and vainly tried to look back at Jerry.

"Why ever did you do that?" she demanded, turning a pair of flashing grey eyes on Patrick.

"Sure I thought you wanted to get aboard the train," he responded, with all meekness, "and I was trying to help you."

"And so you did, but you left my escort!"

"Did I now?" exclaimed Patrick with a fine air of innocence. "I was thinking that I saw someone just beyond, but I didn't know that he belonged to you."

"No more I said that he did!" returned Katie, sharply.

At this moment the train began slowing down and finally came to a standstill. Katie peered out

"It's ashamed of myself I am, at the way I acted," he said with a contrite air, "but I go off duty at the end of this trip and if you will only stay on the car till then, I will take you across to where you wish to go, and I'll apologize handsome to—to your friend. Sure I do be owing him that much aminds for my—my mistake."

Katie tried to frown, but the dimple showed signs of becoming unruly.

Before Patrick could say more, the train gave a series of jerks and got under way. He sprang to his post and called "Grand Central. Seventy-second Street next!" as it rounded the curve and swung into the station. Then he leaned swiftly towards Katie, his hands on the levers. "Say that, you will," he entreated. "He will never find you in that crowd," he added, nodding towards the hurrying throng on the platform, and as the train slowed down for the stop.

"Sure, and it's you have a way with you, Mr. Hennessey!" said Katie with a bubbling laugh. "And anyway, I don't see what else I can do," she added thoughtfully.

And so it came to pass as the express tore northward, passing the local stations in a roar of haste to make up lost time, that Miss Katie Doran sat sweet and demure in a seat near the door of the car, and Patrick feasted his eyes upon her from his post on the platform. "Sure, she's an angel!" he murmured, "and if Jerry gets her, it's a fight for her he will have to, for I'll never give up trying till they reach the church door and—"

At this moment there came a blinding flash! The lights in the cars suddenly went out, and a pungent odor sifted through the air. Here and there a woman's cry came out of the darkness. There was a sound of breaking glass, and a confused noise of feet. Patrick felt someone seize his arm and Katie's voice said, "Oh, Patrick, what is the matter?"

"Get behind me, Katie! Don't move or scream!" he commanded, and there was a note in his voice that she had never heard before. "Get back there, all of you!" he cried, and his voice came out of the dark like a trumpet. "Don't rush this door! There is no danger! Nothing but a fuse blown out! Get back!" There was a woman's sudden cry of pain and a struggle. "You would trample a woman, would you, you brute!" came in Patrick's voice. "Take that, ye spalpeen!"

"Oh, Patrick," exclaimed Katie, seizing his arm in the darkness, "what is it?"

"A brute was walking over a woman," he answered, "but he has stopped now," he added grimly. Then he called out cheerfully to the passengers. "You can all see, even if it is dark, that nothing is going to happen. Please don't be blocking the door. Just sit aisy now, until they get things fixed. 'Twill not be long."

A few moments later the cars were again flooded with light, and the passengers settled back relieved and a little ashamed at their needless panic. As the train proceeded on its way, Katie sat very quietly in her place, but once Patrick surprised her glancing at him with a look in her face that he had never seen there before. When the trip was over and Patrick had been relieved from duty, he said to Katie, his heart thumping, "And would you like to be walking a few blocks before we take the car again? 'Tis a fine night."

"Sure, and I think it would be pleasant after all the excitement," she responded demurely, placing a little hand on the arm he held out.

"Katie, were you frightened?" he asked softly as they walked along, for the hand on his arm was trembling just a little.

"No, not with you looking after me," she responded.

Patrick pressed the hand a little closer to his side.

"Sure it's a brave man you are," she said, admiringly. "You talked to them like a lion. I would never be frightened of anything when you were by."

"I wish I might always have the job of keeping you safe," he murmured with his heart in his mouth.

"Do you so?" she breathed, and it seemed to Patrick that her hand nestled a trifle closer into the hollow of his arm.

"Yes, I love you, my darlin'," he whispered, all on fire. "Have I any chance at all?"

"And wherefore not?" she asked softly.

"But Jerry!" he demanded, a sudden trouble in his voice.

"Jerry, is it, you silly boy! Jerry is my own cousin, and he was taking me today to see the girl he is engaged to."

"But what was he saying to you at Casey's that made you blush so?" asked the bewildered Patrick.

"Sure, he was telling me about his girl, what else? And—and—then he was asking me why I didn't go and—and do the same," she ended, her voice trailing off to the merest whisper.

"And will you?" asked Patrick, seizing her hands.

"Yes, sure," she answered gently, raising her eyes to his.

THE GOSPEL OF PAW. A SONG OF THE NEW YEAR. By Charles Buxton Going.

I shall be part of the flood and of the fire—
Part of the daisied field, the basking sun;
Sleep with the snow, wake in the Spring's desire;
Grow in the grass where the winds of summer run.

And of the prairie and the endless sea
I shall be part—part of the drifting shower,
Sigh of the forest, bourgeoning of the tree,
Song of the bird, and hush of twilight hour.

I shall be in the rising of the star
The night's great silences, the mist and dew.
I shall be part of all glad things that are—
Earth unto earth—and life to life anew!



the room. "It's the neatest little figure in all New York she has, the darlin'," he murmured, following her with admiring eyes, "an' she walks like she lived on Fifth Avenue."

While she was gone, a good-looking young fellow came and took a seat at the next table. After glancing around for a moment, as if searching for some one, he called to a passing waitress, "Maggie, where is little Katie tonight?"

"Little Katie, is it?" muttered Patrick, glowering at him. "For two cents I'd punch his head, the impudent young—"

At this moment Katie returned with her dimpled arms full of dish.

"Hello, Katie!" hailed the newcomer. "It's fine you are tonight with your new apron!"

"How are you, Jerry?" she answered with a beaming smile that hurt Patrick to see. Then she busied herself in arraying the savory dishes on the table.

"Oh, Katie," called Jerry, "I am that hungry! I have been driving the team all day in the wind. If you will get me something extra good to eat, I'll tell you a fine secret," and then, as she passed his table, he said something to her in a low voice, and she went off to the kitchen with a conscious laugh.

Patrick's heart was sore within him, and he ate mechanically whatever came first to hand.

After a time Katie returned with Jerry's dinner, and, while she was putting it upon the table he told her something in a low tone which appeared to please her very much, and then he added something that made her blush and laughingly protest.

a bewildering smile, "I am glad you enjoyed your dinner last night well enough to make you want to come back."

"Good evening," answered Patrick, sitting down at her table, his heart thumping with joy, for she was smiling at him and he had her all to himself. There was no Jerry in sight. "Yes, sure, it was a fine dinner," he remarked appreciatively, "but I went away hungry all the same," he added, looking up at her.

"You did?" she inquired.

"Yes, hungry for you," he put in boldly.

"I was not on the bill of fare, Mr. Hennessey," she returned with a toss of her head, but there was just the suspicion of a dimple at the corner of her mouth.

"Sure, no—not on mine at least," retorted Patrick. "I was at the wrong table," he added meaningfully.

"Mr. Hennessey," said Katie, with dignity, "I do not like the way you refer to my—"

At this moment Jerry himself walked past the table, greeting Katie with the familiarity of one assured of a welcome, and from that moment Patrick's dinner was as ashes in his mouth.

It was a bad start, but still he persevered and went to Casey's night after night, and as time went on it was frequently a dead heat, whether he or Jerry received the most of Katie's smiles. Patrick was beginning to have some hope, when, one Saturday night, just as he was going away, he heard Jerry say eagerly to Katie, "I will come for you tomorrow afternoon when you go off duty," and then he added something in a low voice that made Katie blush, and Patrick distinctly saw him give her hand a quick squeeze.

into the dark tunnel. "Sure, it's blocked we are; what is the matter, Mr. Hennessey?"

"I don't know, at all," he responded, "but good luck to it, whatever it is," he added to himself, "for it gives me a chance to talk to her."

"Now, I can't get up or down, and there is Jerry back there on the platform and me here!" she exclaimed in perplexity. "Sure you saw him plain enough, Mr. Hennessey," she declared. "Why ever did you do it?" she demanded in a severe tone, but withal there was again just a suspicion of that dimple at the corner of her mouth. Patrick gave a swift look around. The persons nearest them were a group of Italians who were busy jabbering their disgust at the delay. They couldn't understand him anyway. "Faith, then, I couldn't help it," he answered boldly. "It was just my heart reachin' out for you on a sudden, and before I could stop myself you were in the car!"

For a moment the dimple had its way, and then was sternly repressed.

"Sure, and you are the impudent one!" she said with dignity. "I will get off at the Grand Central and wait for Jerry, that is if your train ever reaches there," she added with a toss of her head.

"Oh, it will start again after a while," said Patrick contentedly. "But how will he know that you are getting off at the Grand Central? He will never see you in the crowd there is there."

"Sure, what will I do then?" questioned Miss Doran, puckering up her pretty brow, "for we were going to take the crosstown car at 125th Street and go over and have supper with some friends of Jerry's, and it's dark by now, and—and I haven't any car fare, not expecting to need any."

Then Patrick had a brilliant inspiration.